

# Georgia Department of Public Safety

## Policy Manual

<b>SUBJECT</b> <b>RECORDS, FORMS, AND REPORTS</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> <b>13.02</b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b> <b>ALL EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>DATE REVISED</b> <b>9/11/2023</b>
	<b>POLICY REVIEWED</b> <b>9/11/2023</b>

### 13.02.1 Purpose

To establish the standards for development, completion, submission, storage, and retention of the Department's records and reports.

### 13.02.2 Policy

It shall be the policy of the Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS) to maintain complete and accurate records of its operations in accordance with established regulations, and state and federal law. Further, DPS will provide all members with the necessary tools and instruction to gather and compile data necessary to prepare all reports.

### 13.02.3 Definitions

- A. Forms – Paper or computer-based means to collect and record data.
- B. Records – Documents or computer files used to maintain statistical or historical information related to DPS operations.
- C. Reports – Documents or computer data transmissions that inform affected members of DPS operations. Reports become records when approved by a supervisor and properly filed.
- D. Records Management Officer (RMO) – The member responsible for coordinating DPS forms development and record keeping functions.

### 13.02.4 Forms Development

- A. Development or modification of forms may originate with any unit or individual that identifies an appropriate need.
  - 1. Members may request the creation of a new form by submitting a memorandum through the chain of command specifying why the form is needed.
    - a. The RMO shall coordinate with the Information Technology Division, or other members as deemed appropriate, for assistance in creating the form.

- b. A sample of the form shall be submitted to affected units for feedback prior to final adoption.
  - 2. A member who originates or modifies a form shall submit the form and a memorandum to the RMO through the chain of command.
    - a. The memorandum shall explain why the form or modification is needed.
    - b. Each supervisor in the chain of command shall approve or disapprove the submission.
    - c. If the submission is disapproved, the form or modification shall be returned to the originating member, citing the reason for the disapproval.
    - d. Submissions may be prepared on paper or by computer media in an approved software application, or both.
  - 3. The RMO shall provide information to the appropriate supervisor when a submitted form duplicates or conflicts with an existing form. The supervisor having authority over units that use the form shall determine which form shall be used.
  - 4. Forms prepared for use restricted to Sworn Work Units shall require only the approval of the Sworn Work Unit Supervisor.
- B. When a new form is approved, the RMO shall assign a number to the form.
  - 1. Department forms shall use the prefix "DPS" followed by a number assigned by the RMO.
  - 2. The RMO shall add the form to the Master Forms List maintained by the RMO.
- C. The RMO may request assistance from the Information Technology Division or the originating member if changes to the form are needed.
- D. The RMO shall coordinate with DPS Supply in facilitating the printing of a form, if necessary, distribution to affected units, and provide the following:
  - 1. Approval of the Chief Financial Officer/Comptroller;
  - 2. Additional development of computer-based templates in approved software applications, distributed electronically, filled out on the computer, and printed or electronically submitted, as practicable and appropriate; and
  - 3. A written explanation describing why a printed form is required in lieu of developing a computer-based form (normally, only multi-part forms shall be submitted for printing).
- E. The Records Management Officer shall coordinate with the Information Technology Division in creating and maintaining a central clearinghouse, accessible by all members of the Department, for forms designed for use on the computer.

### **13.02.5 Reports**

- A. Members shall accurately and legibly complete all required reports and submit them through proper channels in accordance with established procedures.
  - 1. The proper submission requirements for each report shall be included on the form used. These requirements shall include:
    - a. The individuals or units which shall receive and/or approve the report, and
    - b. The appropriate time period for completion and submission of the report.
  - 2. Corrections or additions to reports shall be submitted through the same channels as the original and as soon as possible upon determining the need for the change.
- B. Incident Reports (DPS-1113)
  - 1. The investigating member shall complete an incident report no later than five days after the date of the incident, unless there are extenuating circumstances which preclude completion.
  - 2. If the incident report is not complete within five days, an adequate explanation shall be provided to the member's supervisor as soon as possible upon expiration of the five days.
- C. Reports submitted by members shall be truthful and complete, and no member shall knowingly enter or cause to be entered any inaccurate, false, or inappropriate information.
- D. Members shall not falsify, destroy, alter, or remove any report or record of this Department. Any member having knowledge of such actions shall report it to their supervisor.
  - 1. This section shall not apply to changes made at the direction of a supervisor to correct errors or omissions.
  - 2. Records shall be destroyed only in accordance with established records retention procedures as provided annually by the RMO.
- E. Intentional alteration, destruction, unauthorized removal, or falsification of a record or report or any information contained therein, or failure to report such actions, shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, and may be grounds for criminal prosecution.
- F. A report shall be prepared for each of the following:
  - 1. Citizen reports of crimes;
  - 2. Citizen concerns;
  - 3. Incidents involving a member being dispatched or assigned;
  - 4. Criminal and non-criminal cases initiated by a member, and
  - 5. Incidents involving arrests, citations, or summonses.

#### G. Reports of Unusual Occurrences

1. Each Sworn Work Unit shall submit a report to the respective Troop/Region Command, prior to 0800 hours daily, describing any unusual incidents that have occurred during the previous 24-hour period.
2. Submission of Unusual Occurrences Reports shall not relieve members of the responsibility to immediately notify a supervisor of an incident when appropriate.
3. The report shall be prepared on the DPS-001 Unusual Occurrence Report form and forwarded to the Troop/Region Commander as an e-mail attachment. If there is no unusual occurrence to report, no communication to the Troop/Region Commander is necessary.
4. Troop/Region Command shall compile all the reports received and forward them to the appropriate adjutant, as soon as possible, no later than 0900 hours. Reports shall be printed and kept at the Troop/Region level.
5. The following are required to be submitted on the Unusual Occurrences Report:
  - a. Any serious criminal activity investigated by a member or for which the member renders assistance to another agency.
  - b. Any incident which may attract the attention of the news media and may result in news media inquiries to any commissioned officer or other command level members.
  - c. Any incident that may be of interest to the Governor or the Command Staff.
  - d. Activities that may require the assistance of the Department (e.g., labor difficulties or civil unrest).
  - e. Significant road closures and hazardous roadway conditions, particularly on Interstate Highways and major state routes.
  - f. An incident involving hazardous materials.
  - g. Exceptional pursuits (e.g., involving injuries, damage to DPS vehicles, or extended duration).
  - h. Crashes involving multiple fatalities.
- H. Instructions on preparing field reports shall be included in each Field Training Officer Training Program to ensure that all sworn members who successfully complete field training can complete the required reports.
- I. All reports shall be reviewed and approved by the Sworn Work Unit Supervisor, or their designee, prior to submission.

#### 13.02.6 Records

- A. DPS records consist of all information related to the operation of the Department and maintained in the files of any unit.

- B. Release or display of records, as well as forms and reports, to persons other than DPS members shall be in accordance with Policy #13.01 - Open Records Policy. Should any question or issue arise regarding the release of any record, the Attorney Manager of the Open Records Unit or Legal Director shall be consulted.
- C. All information shall be captured in the approved Records Management System. No further documents shall be maintained.
- D. Distribution and accountability for Uniform Traffic Citations (DPS-32) shall be governed by Policy #13.05 - Citation Distribution and Accountability and the DPS Department's Records Retention Schedule.
- E. Administrative Files
  - 1. Each Sworn Work Unit shall maintain a set of files containing records related to that unit's administration of the Sworn Work Unit. These files will be maintained electronically, in the Records Management System, or in hard copy files as appropriate.
  - 2. These files shall include:
    - a. Correspondence Files;
    - b. Property Files;
    - c. Files related to the maintenance of equipment, including vehicles;
    - d. Purchasing and Expense Reports;
    - e. Personnel Records, including leave, records of duty status, and members information;
    - f. Inspection Reports; and
    - g. Other non-enforcement records and reports.
- F. Filing Procedures
  - 1. All Sworn Work Unit Supervisors shall use the established Post File guide to organize the non-enforcement reports necessary to the operation of the Sworn Work Unit. (See Exhibit #13.02-1, #13.02-2 and #13.02-3)
  - 2. Units other than Sworn Work Units shall utilize established file guides or arrange with the RMO to establish a file guide for the unit's operation.
- G. Digital Records
  - 1. Records that are maintained digitally shall be backed up regularly.
  - 2. Incremental backups shall be performed daily.
  - 3. Full backups shall be performed weekly.
  - 4. A second full backup shall be performed at the end of each month and stored off-site.

H. Retention of Records

1. The RMO shall maintain and distribute a Retention Schedule for all DPS reports.
2. Records shall be filed in a manner appropriate to the respective need for access and destroyed as indicated in the Retention Schedule.
3. When records are destroyed, the Sworn Work Unit Supervisor or designee shall submit the appropriate DPS form (updated and distributed annually) to the RMO, specifically citing which records were destroyed.

I. Records Disaster Plan

1. The following is the official Records Disaster Plan for Sworn Work Units:
  - a. Fire: When such a building is evacuated, a member should make sure all file cabinets are closed.
  - b. Flood, Hurricane, or similar weather-related event: When such an event is anticipated or an evacuation occurs, all records should be removed from the bottom two file cabinet drawers and store as high as possible.
2. Records shall not be stored near electrical panels or appliances.
3. Records stored in boxes on the floor shall be placed on pallets or other suitable platforms.
4. The RMO shall be notified as soon as possible concerning any loss of records. Reconstruction efforts shall be administered in accordance with the Retention Schedule when the immediate danger is over.

J. Post Blotters

1. Shall be retained at the post/unit level permanently.
2. Are no longer created.